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Ellet Joseph Waggoner

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1904

March 28, 1904

“Not Under the Law” Australasian Signs of the Times 19, 13.

E. J. Waggoner

“What you say concerning the Sabbath as a law to be observed by Christians is not scriptural; for we are not under the law, but under grace.”*BEST March 28, 1904, par. 1*

This is but a sample of numerous communications that come to us, or of statements which we frequently hear. So general is the idea that we are not to keep the Sabbath of the fourth commandment, because the apostle says, “Ye are not under law, but under grace,” that it deserves special attention.*BEST March 28, 1904, par. 2*

One strange thing is that we never hear that text applied to any other than the fourth commandment. But the fourth commandment is only a part of the law; and if the fact that we are not under the law absolves us from keeping the Sabbath, then it just as surely frees us from obedience to the other nine precepts of the law. Suppose therefore we make the application.*BEST March 28, 1904, par. 3*

The eighth commandment says, “Thou shalt not steal.” But when the thief is reproved for his dishonest practices, and is told that he should live by labour, and not by fraud, he may retort, “Your argument is not scriptural, for we are not under the law, but under grace.”*BEST March 28, 1904, par. 4*

Its Practical Working

The violent man whose hand is against every man, when told that hatred and violence are murder, and that the commandment says, “Thou shalt not kill,” has as good a right to use the text to justify himself, as the man who uses it against the Sabbath. “We are not under the law, but under grace,” he will say, as he makes an assault upon his neighbour.*BEST March 28, 1904, par. 5*

Our friend sees a man who is going to the house of the woman whose “steps take hold on hell,” and he admonishes him to turn back, quoting to him the commandment, “Thou shalt not commit adultery.” But this man has heard our friends say that it is unscriptural to keep the fourth commandment, because we “are not under the law, but under grace,” and so he says, “Have you forgotten your text so soon? Don’t you know that we are not under the law, but under grace? Instead of reproving me, you had better come along with me, for surely so conscientious a man as you are does not want to be in opposition to Scripture.” What can our friend reply?—Nothing whatever that will have any effect upon that man, unless he says, “I was mistaken; I made an unwarranted use of those words.” Let us hope that he would do so.*BEST March 28, 1904, par. 6*

“No Other Gods before Me”

Our friend goes as a missionary to China. He teaches the heathen that the Bible is the Word of God, and to be obeyed, and an honest-minded heathen who has read the Bible for himself begins to keep the seventh-day Sabbath, “according to the commandment.” Our friend is shocked, and says, “That is not at all right; you must not keep the Sabbath; we are not under the law, but under grace.” The poor Chinaman does not see it clearly; but since it is much more convenient not to keep the Sabbath than to keep it, he allows custom and convenience to make up for the obscurity, and yields to his new teacher.*BEST March 28, 1904, par. 7*

But the next day our missionary friend is shocked to find his new convert making obeisance to a hideous idol, and burning some strange smelling stuff before it. “What!” he exclaims, “Have you forgotten that the great God who created all things has said, ‘Thou shalt have no other gods before Me,’ ‘Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, ...thou shall not bow down thyself to them?’” And the simple-minded man will reply, “Me no forget; me ‘member your teaching velly well; not under law, under grace.” By what arguments will our friend make it plain to him that while the expression, “not under the law, but under grace,” takes away the obligation to keep the fourth commandment, it does not in the least diminish our obligation to keep all the others?*BEST March 28,*

1904, par. 8

We have not drawn a fanciful picture. Many hundred years ago the same argument was used that we have put into the mouth of our friend. Read in *Jeremiah 7:8-10* the reproof which the Lord gave to Israel of old:-*BEST March 28, 1904, par. 9*

“Behold, ye trust in lying words, that cannot profit. Will ye steal, murder, and commit adultery, and swear falsely, and burn incense unto Baal, and walk after other gods whom ye know not; and come and stand before Me in this house, which is called by My name, and say, We are delivered to do all these abominations?”*BEST March 28, 1904, par. 10*

Why Not Applied to All?

As a matter of fact the words, “not under the law, but under grace,” are not now used, at least not to any great extent, to justify disobedience to any other commandment than the fourth. And why not? There is but one reason, and that is, that in this country it would be unpopular to do so. This would be a severe accusation if it were not for the fact that those who make use of the excuse do not know what they are doing. They may say, and with truth, that they do not wish to steal, and murder, and commit adultery; that such things are abhorrent to them. Quite so; but that only proves that it is not the commandment of God that restrains them, but the impulse given them by their training and by public opinion. If it were popular to do those things, and they had been brought up to do them, they would plead the same excuse for them that they now do for not keeping the Sabbath.*BEST March 28, 1904, par. 11*

Let us consider what the Scripture really does say, and thus we shall know what it means. The text is *Romans 6:12-15*, and reads thus:-*BEST March 28, 1904, par. 12*

“Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin; but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God. For sin shall not have

dominion over you; for ye are not under the law, but under grace. What then? shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid.”*BEST March 28, 1904, par. 13*

Note these obvious facts:-*BEST March 28, 1904, par. 14*

1. Those who are not under the law are those over whom sin has no dominion. But “sin is the transgression of the law.” *1 John 3:4*. Therefore,*BEST March 28, 1904, par. 15*

2. Those who are not under the law are the ones who are not transgressing the law, but who are keeping it.*BEST March 28, 1904, par. 16*

3. It is not stated, as a universal fact, that all men are not under the law, but under grace. The words, “Ye are not under law, but under grace,” are addressed to those who have been “baptized into Jesus Christ,” “in the likeness of His death,” and have been made “alive from the dead,” “in the likeness of His resurrection.” It is therefore not at all true of the transgressors of the law that they are “not under the law, but under grace.” Such persons are still under the law.*BEST March 28, 1904, par. 17*

4. But “the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men.” *Titus 2:11*. Its object is to save men from sin-from the transgression of the law. Those to accept this grace are brought out from under the law, to walk in it without fault before God. For “God, sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh;*that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us*, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.” *Romans 8:3, 4*.*BEST March 28, 1904, par. 18*

Let us take heed not to trust in vain words that do not profit, but in the Lord Jesus Christ, whose delight it was to do the will of God, whose law was in His heart.*BEST March 28, 1904, par. 19*

July 18, 1904

“Sunday the First Day of the Week” Australasian Signs of the Times 19, 29.

E. J. Waggoner

“Can you kindly inform me what Bible authority we have for calling Sunday the first day of the week?”*BEST July 18, 1904, par. 1*

The terms of your question should be inverted; for it is not Sunday that is called the first day of the week, but the first day of the week that is called Sunday. The number was before the name. Then when the question is inverted, and it is asked what Bible authority we have for calling the first day of the week Sunday, the reply must be that we have none; for the names of all the days of the week are of heathen origin.*BEST July 18, 1904, par. 2*

It must be known to every reader of the Bible that from the beginning the days of the week were known only by number, as first, second, third, etc. Only one was named, and that was the seventh. Its name was Sabbath, and of course it is so still. See the first chapter of Genesis, and *Exodus 20:8-11*. Yet, in reality “Sabbath” is not the name, but only the description of the seventh day. The word “Sabbath” simply tells what the day is—a rest; for Sabbath is the Hebrew word for rest.*BEST July 18, 1904, par. 3*

As might be expected, there is in the entire Bible no change in the titles of the days from those given in the beginning. They are always, with the exception of the seventh day as already noted, known only by number; and these titles they still retain. No matter what other names men may call them, no act of man can change what God is doing. Whatever God has called a thing, that is the name of it.*BEST July 18, 1904, par. 4*

The question, then, which is really to be settled is this: Have the days of the week come to us with the name designation that they had from the beginning, without change? In other words, Are the days now known as the first and the seventh the same ones that God so designated at the creation?*BEST July 18, 1904, par. 5*

It is easy to show that the answer to these questions must be, Yes. God Himself keeps the record, and He can make no mistake. The deliverance of Israel from Egypt took place about twenty-five hundred years after the creation; and at that time God made it very plain which day was the seventh, so that there could not possibly be any mistake, even supposing that the people had previously lost the reckoning. For forty years God was their Time-keeper, marking the seventh day each week by wonderful miracles. Of course when they knew the seventh day, there was no trouble about the others.*BEST July 18, 1904, par. 6*

And God continued to be the Time-keeper when the children of Israel came to Canaan. When they forgot Him, and began to break the Sabbath, becoming like the heathen, He reproved them again and again by His prophets; and at last they were carried into captivity, solely because they had not kept the Sabbath. See *Jeremiah 17* and *2 Chronicles 36*. From the time of the Babylonian captivity, the Jews never again went into idolatry, but, as far as outward acts were concerned, were most zealous worshippers of Jehovah, and very punctilious concerning the Sabbath.*BEST July 18, 1904, par. 7*

Then Christ came, and testified both by word and deed that the day which the Jews were keeping was the true Sabbath of the Lord. Soon after His ascension, the Jews were scattered over all the earth, yet there has never arisen any doubt as to which day is the Sabbath. If a company of Jews from every nation were to meet in London, they would all be keeping the same day of the week-the seventh day.*BEST July 18, 1904, par. 8*

Having the seventh day so firmly established, it is easy enough to determine all the other days in the week. One has only to be able to count seven, either forward or backwards. There are but seven days a week, and when the seventh is reached, the count begins with the first again, the next day. The day that follows immediately after the Bible Sabbath is the first day of the week and is now known as Sunday.*BEST July 18, 1904, par. 9*

"In the end of the Sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the

sepulchre.” *Matthew 28:1.BEST July 18, 1904, par. 10*

Or, to state it another way. The resurrection of Jesus took place on the first in a week, “when the Sabbath was passed.” *Mark 16:1, 2.* The day was by the heathen dedicated to the sun, and was known among the Romans as *dies solis*, -day of the sun, or, the sun’s day, from which comes our word Sunday. So we see that there cannot possibly be any question that the day called Sunday is the first day of the week. This is established by indisputable Bible testimony, which at the same time shows that it is not, and cannot be, the Sabbath day.*BEST July 18, 1904, par. 11*

